

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

THE CALIFORNIA LOWLAND MINK A DISTINCT RACE.

BY JOSEPH GRINNELL.

(Contribution from the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California.)

There are now eighty mink skulls in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology taken within the State of California. Some of these are accompanied by skins and a lesser number by complete skeletons; but so far as the present study is concerned, the skulls only are of importance. Recent opportunity has been afforded the writer of comparing selected specimens from California with near-topotypes of *Mustela vison energumenos*, in the United States Biological Survey and National Museum collections, from Chilliwack, Port Moody and Sumas, British Columbia. It has become apparent that there are *two* races of the mink in California, *energumenos* (or something very nearly akin to that race), and a distinct one, which is herewith described. A large series of the latter gathered from one locality, Stockton, serves to accentuate the diagnostic characters by its uniformity in mass effect.

***Mustela vison aestuarina* new subspecies.**

CALIFORNIA LOWLAND MINK.

Type.—Male adult comprising skin, skull and body skeleton; No. 23,660, Mus. Vert. Zool.; Grizzly Island, Solano County, California, November 30, 1915; trapped by A. H. Luscomb for Miss Annie M. Alexander and by her presented to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.

Diagnosis.—Similar to *Mustela vison energumenos*, but with cranium lighter in build, rostrum weaker, brain-case narrower and proportionately higher, zygomata less widely spreading posteriorly, and auditory bullae having steeper medial sides.

Material.—Forty-seven skulls from vicinity of Stockton, San Joaquin County; 4 skins with skulls and skeletons from Grizzly Island, Solano County; 1 skin with skull and skeleton from Joyce Island, Solano

County; 2 skins with skulls from Petaluma, Sonoma County; 1 skull from "Marin County."

Distribution.—The lowlands of west-central California, particularly the delta region at the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers; west to Petaluma and Marin County. No minks are known to occur on the south side of Golden Gate and San Francisco Bay.

Remarks.—The field has been clarified, nomenclaturally, by Hollister in his Synopsis of the American Minks (Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., vol. 44, 1913, pp. 471-480); there appears to be no obstacle to bestowing a new name upon the race here pointed out. There are doubtless characters pertaining to general size of the animal and to color and quality of pelage, but lack of satisfactory material prevents definite statements regarding them. It is to be expected, from the cranial dimensions, that the California Lowland Mink is of smaller size than its relative, *energumenos*. The coloration, in corresponding season, is notably pale, as compared with that of the few northern and mountain minks at hand, and there is little or no white on chin and throat. Also the pelage is not so heavy, the overhair in particular seeming more scanty.

The localities in California, from which there are specimens in the Museum at this time referred to *energumenos*, are: Jackson Lake, Siskiyou County, 1; North Fork Coffee Creek, Trinity County, 1; Hay Fork, Trinity County, 3; Cuddeback, Humboldt County, 3; Carlotta, Humboldt County, 4; Independence Lake, Nevada County, 6; Cisco, Placer County, 1; Merced Lake, Mariposa County, 3; Fish Springs, Inyo County, 3.

MEASUREMENTS, IN MILLIMETERS, OF SKULLS OF ADULT MALES OF *Mustela vison aestuarina*, ALL FROM WEST-CENTRAL CALIFORNIA.

Mus. No.	Locality.	Condylar-lateral length.*	Zygomatic breadth.	Pre-mastoid breadth of brain-case.†	Mastoid width.	Width of rostrum.‡
10850	Petaluma .	67.7	39.0	29.1	33.5	14.6
23660§	Grizzly Island .	68.6	38.8	28.6	34.0	14.9
23666	Joyce Island .	64.7	35.6	28.0	32.1	14.3
4979	Stockton . .	65.0	37.2	28.4	32.9	14.1
9077	Stockton . .	65.5	38.2	28.5	33.0	14.2
9086	Stockton . .	68.1	40.4	29.6	34.4	15.1
9087	Stockton . .	67.9	39.6	30.2	34.2	14.8
9088	Stockton . .	66.9	38.0	29.2	34.0	14.9
9090	Stockton . .	65.3	37.1	28.3	33.7	14.0
9103	Stockton . .	66.5	38.9	29.0	35.2	14.2

* Measured from anteriormost projection of premaxillaries to posteriormost vertical plane touching both occipital condyles.

† Measured by placing calipers at least width of brain-case in front of mastoid processes and behind posterior zygomatic roots.

‡ Measured at narrowest part of rostrum behind bulging bases of canines.

§ Type.